



Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

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The Healthy Journey

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THANKS

We completed the pilot study in November 2003. Thank you to the more than 250 pilot participants who returned for their second visit. In addition, we saw 108 new pilot participants. We are forever grateful for your help in getting this study off the ground. You have helped us to begin answering some questions about minority health and aging in an urban population. We found that we have a lot of work to do in helping people control hypertension, diabetes and depressive symptoms. We hope you find the information that our doctors and staff have given you helpful.

HANDLS - MOVING ON

Thanks to the pilot participants, the HANDLS Pilot Study was a great success. We obtained information about the logistics of conducting the study in the neighborhoods of Baltimore. We refined our testing procedures and we are ready to move the HANDLS medical research vehicles (MRVs) to the population study. We plan to move the vehicles approximately every three months.

Our next stop will be in South Baltimore. The MRVs will be parked in the Locust Point neighborhood on Woodall Street and Fort Avenue next to the firehouse. Our recruiters will visit homes in the Riverside, Locust Point, and Sharp-Leadenhall

communities. In the next phase of HANDLS, we will scientifically select households for invitations to participate in the study. If you live in one of the neighborhoods that we will visit you may see our recruiters in your neighborhood. Your home may be selected and our recruiters will knock on your door to invite you to join the study.

STAFF NEWS

HANDLS Community Outreach Coordinator

Welcome Bridget Cromwell to HANDLS. Many of you may have met her during your visit to the MRV in 2003. She came to the HANDLS study with a background in consumer relations. She has an ear for the people and will make your stay pleasant and rewarding.



Bridget says:

"I am the Community Outreach Coordinator for HANDLS. What I do is make the connection between the neighborhoods of Baltimore City and HANDLS. I will be working with your neighborhood leaders (community organizations, politicians, and health-



care providers) to bring the HANDLS study to you, the people of Baltimore City. Another part of my job is to make sure your time with us on the MRVs is as pleasant as possible. I will contact you the day before your appointment to confirm your day and time with us. I will inform you of what you will need to bring with you on the day of your appointment. I will confirm that you have a way of getting to and from your appointment. While on the vehicle, we'll try our best to make your stay with us pleasant. You will receive breakfast and lunch from a well-known Baltimore catering company. If you have any concerns while you are on the vehicle you can come to me and together we will work them out."

FOCUS ON HEALTH – HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Many of the HANDLS participants have a story to tell about their visit to the MRV.

During our visits from February 2003 to November 2003 we found that several people had high blood pressure but were unaware of their problem. Below you will read about one of your fellow participant's experience with high blood pressure. We want to share this story with you so that you or someone you know with high blood pressure can better understand why high blood pressure must be treated.

A story to tell

Mr. H is an excellent example of someone who has truly benefited from participating in our study. He is a gentleman in his early 40s with high blood pressure.

Mr. H knew about his high blood pressure and was taking medications off and on for several years. During his first visit his blood pressure was 204/102 in his right arm and 210/102 in his left arm. We informed him that he would need to see a doctor immediately because of his high blood pressure. With his permission, the MRV doctor on

duty called Mr. H's doctor to explain the situation and his doctor agreed to see him right away. Before leaving he met with the nurse practitioner and he was given educational materials on controlling high blood pressure (NIA-Age Pages). More importantly, they discussed the risks of not treating high blood pressure resulting in problems such as stroke, heart attack, and amputation. He was given an appointment to return to the MRV in 30 days to participate in the study once his blood pressure was under control.

The nurse practitioner made a follow up call to Mr. H. He reported that his doctor gave him prescriptions for blood pressure medications and he has been taking them on a regular basis. Mr. H. returned to the MRVs about four weeks later and his blood pressure was 148/80. He was then able to complete the day of testing.

Things to know about High Blood Pressure

- Over 50 million American adults have high blood pressure.
- African-Americans are more likely to have high blood pressure compared to other groups.
- African-Americans tend to get high blood pressure earlier in life and have higher death rates from stroke, heart disease, and kidney failure.

What is High Blood Pressure?

A blood pressure reading of 140/90 or higher is considered high blood pressure. Once high blood pressure develops, it usually lasts a lifetime. The most important thing to know is that it can be treated and controlled.

High blood pressure is called "the silent killer" be-

cause it usually has no symptoms. Some people do not find out about their high blood pressure until they have trouble with their heart, brain, or kidneys. When high blood pressure is not found and treated, it can cause:

- The heart to get bigger, and may cause heart failure
- Small bulges (aneurysms) to form in blood vessels. Common locations are the main artery from the heart (aorta), arteries in the brain, legs, and intestines, and the artery leading to the spleen.
- Blood vessels in the kidneys may become narrow, and cause kidney failure
- Arteries all over the body may “harden” faster, especially in the heart, brain, kidney, and legs. This can cause a heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, or amputation of part of the leg.
- Blood vessels in the eyes may burst or bleed, and cause vision changes and result in blindness.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, www.nhlbi.nih.gov

Resources:

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
Health Information Center
P.O. Box 30105
Bethesda, MD 20824-0105
Phone: 301-592-8573
Fax: 301-592-8563
E-mail: NHLBIinfo@rover.nhlbi.nih.gov
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>

National Institute on Aging
Information Center
P.O. Box 8057
Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8057
1-800-222-2225
1-800-222-4225 (TTY)
E-mail: niainfo@jbs1.com
<http://www.nia.nih.gov>

HANDLS ACTIVITIES

HANDLS was part of several community events this past spring. We gave out health information at the Riverside Park Playground on April 24, 2004. We also participated in the Matilda Koval Health Center Family Fun Day and provided screening tests for blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol.

For more information about the HANDLS Study please visit our website @ handls.nih.gov or call the toll free number 866-207-8363.



Bridget Cromwell, HANDLS Community Outreach Coordinator (right) and Jennifer Norbeck, Study Manager (left) provided health information to South Baltimore residents at the Riverside Park Playground Opening. The HANDLS staff thanks Anne Fiocco, Mary Braman, and Shannon Sullivan from the Riverside Action Group for allowing us to take part in this fun activity.

The Quarterly Newsletter for the HANDLS Community Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

The purpose of this study is to learn about changes in health over time. Using our medical research vehicles, we want to study as many people with different backgrounds as we can. We want this study to help us understand healthy aging by examining the affects of different backgrounds on changes in health over time. The information that we gather will help improve health and prevent disabilities. We want to do this for people from all backgrounds, particularly those in poor and minority communities.

For information about our study call 1-866-207-8363
or visit our website hands.nih.gov



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